THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

27 APR 1966

The Honorable Robert S. McNamara
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
Washington, D.C.

Dear Bob:

As an outgrowth of our meeting on 5 March 1966 and because of my real concern about "constant interdiction" of supplies being delivered to the Viet Cong, I have had my staff take a look at the problem. Our concern has been centered around the objective of increasing the difficulty of resupply rather than seeking complete stoppage which we believe would be unattainable. Intelligence information tells us that material reaching a VC unit from other than SVN sources is collected at one of several depots in South China, is transshipped to Hanoi by two main rail routes (or by sea), is transported by road, inland waterways and rail to the Hanoi/Haiphong area, then through a series of routes via southern NVN into Laos, down the Laotian panhandle and thence through a series of routes into distribution points within SVN, from where internal distribution takes place. If the source is USSR, the most of the economic material is introduced by sea to Hanoi while military equipment normally is shipped by rail through China, and then follows the rest of the route south. On the surface, this is a complex logistical supply line. However, the total amount, currently estimated at a relatively few tons per day, which travels all the way into SVN is small, both in absolute magnitude and as compared to the road capacity. Additionally, the characteristics of the material -- small arms, ammunition, medical supplies, etc. -- facilitate packaging adaptable to small or large trucks

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or to human carriage. Since the total amount taken into SVN is small compared to what enters NVN by rail or ship from China or USSR, very large reductions, by attack, of depots in North Vietnam would appear desirable to affect the thruput into SVN. Furthermore, attacks on the relatively extensive road system of NVN would need to be very severe to impact the small number of trucks per day moving south for SVN. In addition to interdiction of rail, road and water access to Hanoi/Haiphong, there are several relative choke points in and near the Laotian traverse where different modes of attack might be examined. Obviously, the distribution points within SVN, when and if located, become very high value targets since they represent a large logistical investment. It is to be noted, however, that the material imports represent only a relatively small fraction of the needs of the VC, the rest of which is derived locally.

With respect to the "choke" points in truck routes, there appear currently to be three or four main ones. For example, the Mu Gia pass is one of these. The recent attack by B-52's on this pass could be considered as a step toward impacting the logistical supply structure. Continuing such attacks and mounting others, appears useful if they are augmented by a comprehensive reconnaissance effort designed to evaluate the impact on a day-to-day basis. With this rapid feedback system, newer and perhaps more effective weapons could be given a calibratable test. Though similar efforts during WW-II and Korea were not, in general, completely successful, it is just possible that with the newer weapons and techniques sizable restraints on increased supplies might result. Taking maximum advantage of the geography, one might use such ordnance as the tripwire anti-personnel mine, the Dragontooth, anti-personnel bomblet, variable time fused penetrating cratering bombs for road (or repair) disruption, suppression of protective AAA, etc. Employment of the more novel newer weapons might involve

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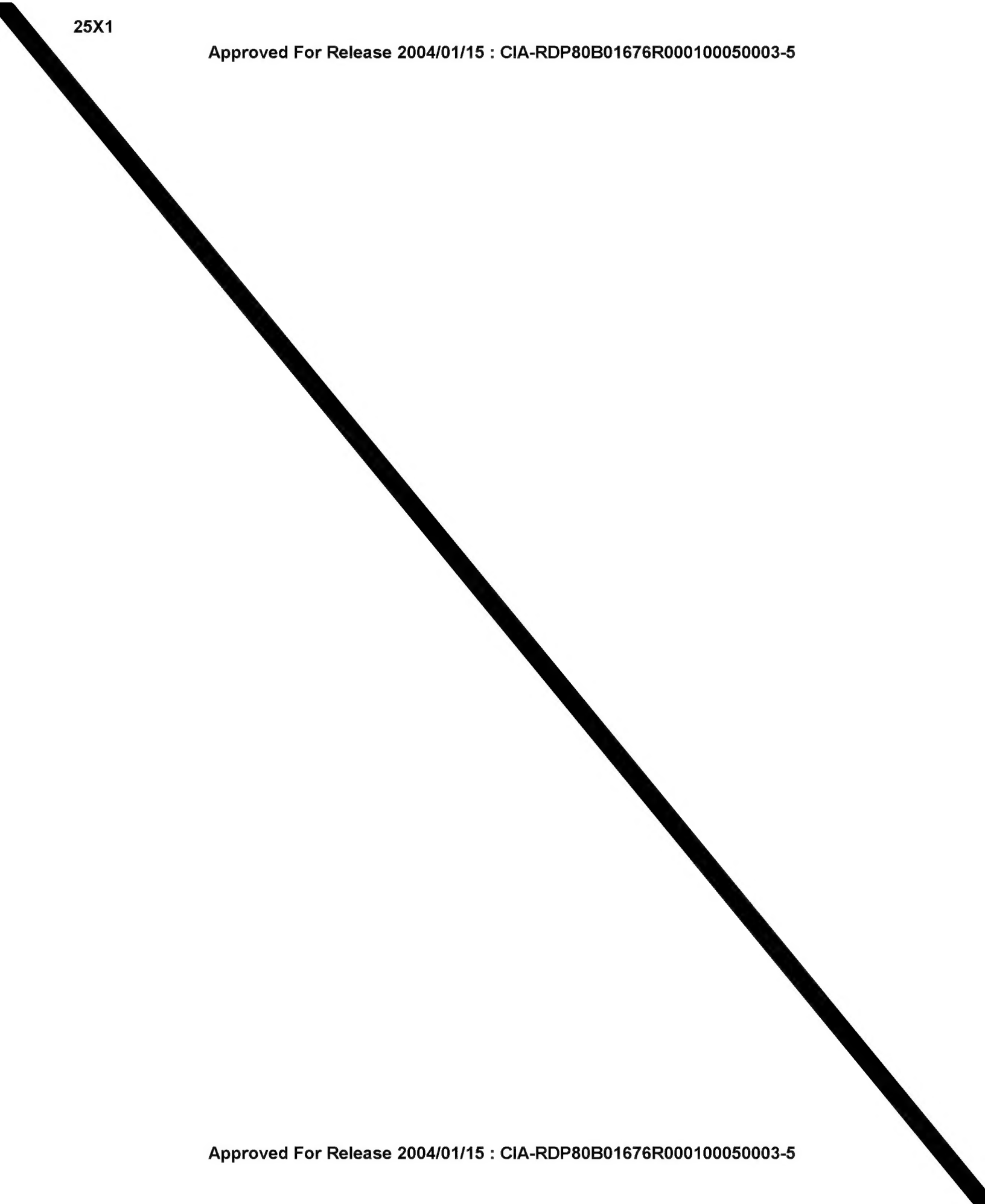

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